

EMILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND REFORMER
195

mother, long ailing and crippled, passed away at Me'dan. Various painful circumstances attended the death and the funeral; and Goncourt, writing at the end of the year, pictures Zola as having become a perfect hypochondriac in consequence of this loss. He complained of all sorts of ailments, kidney disease and palpitations of the heart, talked of his own death as being near at hand, and feared that he would not have time to finish anything. Briefly," he was filling the world with his name, his books were selling by the hundred thousand, no other author, perhaps, had ever created such a stir, and yet he felt profoundly miserable." *

About the time when his mother died his articles on "scientific fiction," previously issued, some in "Le Voltaire" and others in the "Viestnik Yevropi," were republished in a volume.² One of them had greatly offended Laffitte, the editor of "Le Voltaire," who being mixed up in sundry transactions with some of Gambetta's satellites, resented Zola's caustic allusions to them. Nor was an article on some scandal occasioned by the erotic publications of the "Gril Bias" to his liking. He ended by accusing his contributor of defending obscenity and of treating public men with disrespect. A rupture followed. Zola castigated

Laffitte in a foot-note to one of the incriminated articles when he reissued them in a book, and turned to "Le Kgaro," which gave him all liberty to defend his ideas. He then began a series of articles, republished in a volume the following year under the title of "Une Oampagne."³

¹ "Journal des Goncourt," Yol. VI, p. 127.

² "Le Eoman Experimental," Paris, Charpentier, 1880, 18mo, vii-416 pages. This volume, in which, the whole theory of Naturalistic fiction is expounded, has lieen reprinted several times with the mention: " ITouvelle Edition."

⁸ "Une Campague," Paris, Charpentier, 1881, 18mo, x-408 pages.